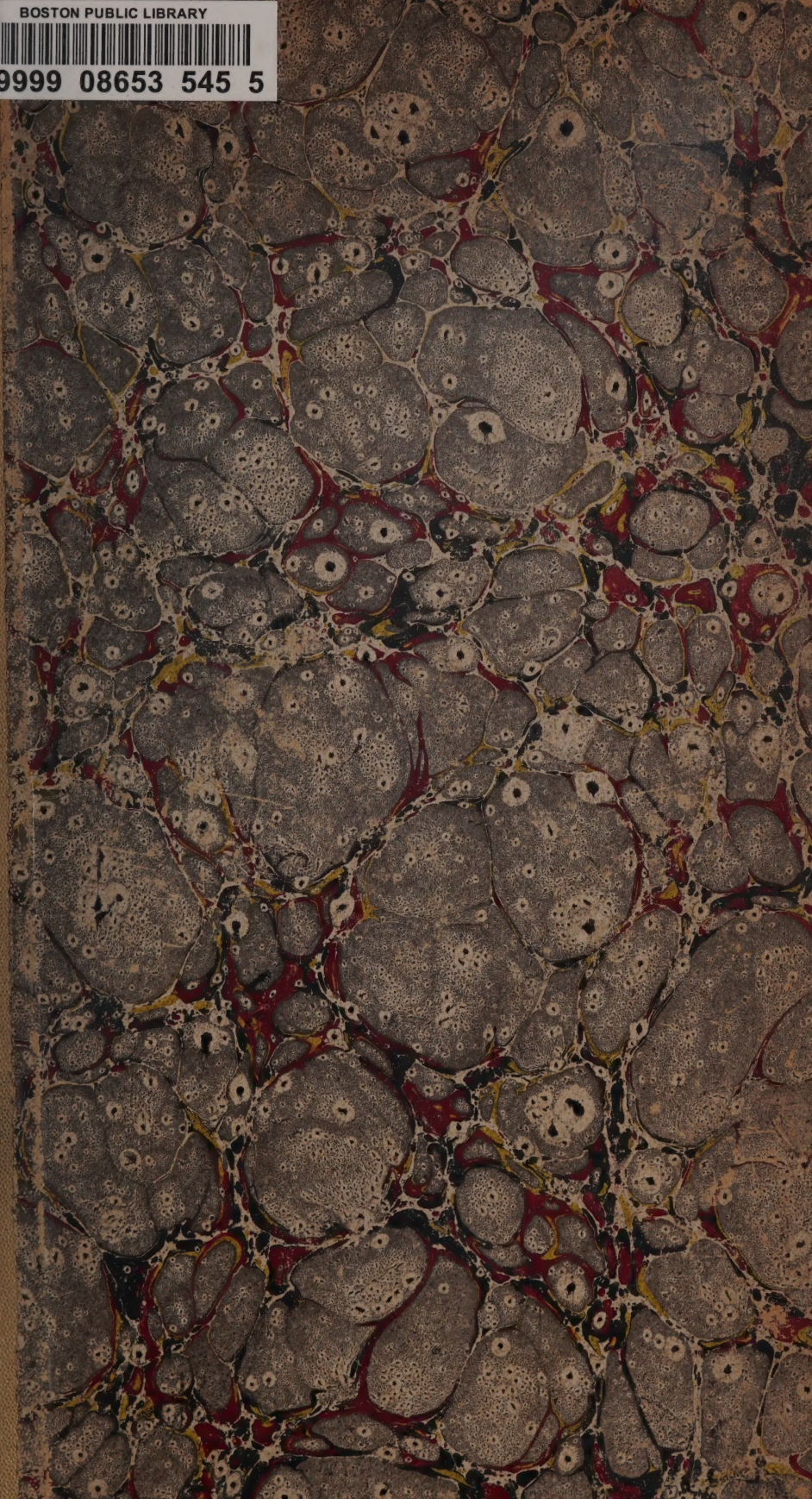


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June 8, 1900,

ADDRESS

TO THE

CITIZENS OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Read at the State Temp. Convention, held Sept. 12 & 13, 1853.

BY REV. EDWARD BEECHER, D. D.

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Fellow Citizens : — Assembled in Convention to consider the present condition of the great cause of Temperance, and to devise measures for its support, our feelings impel us to address you in view of the momentous crisis which now impends.

It is well known that a powerful combination has been formed, and large amounts of money raised or pledged to secure the repeal of the beneficent law which has been enacted by your representatives, to suppress the sale of intoxicating drinks. It is also known that a deep and wide spread interest is felt by the opponents of this law in other states, in the success of this effort for repeal; and that they have manifested a determined purpose to co-operate with this combination in all possible ways for the attainment of this end.

It is no less apparent that a deep interest is felt throughout this nation, in a large and constantly increasing body of men, that this law should not be repealed, but sustained and perfected. Nor is this interest confined to this nation; it pervades and excites intelligent philanthropists throughout the civilized world.

Allow us then to set before you some reasons why you should, with increasing unity and energy, rise superior to all other issues, and thoroughly oppose and defeat, in the coming election, the plans of the opponents of the law, and cheer the hearts of intelligent philanthropists throughout the world, by choosing men who will not only sustain it, but intelligently effect all that is essential for its perfection and thorough execution.

In order to accomplish this we would entreat you to make this, in the coming election, the paramount question, not only to such an extent that no one shall receive your votes, even if nominated by your

own party, unless he is an avowed friend and defender of the law, but also so that a friend of the law in any other party shall receive your vote rather than an opponent of the law in your own.

We request you then carefully to consider the length and the thoroughness of the experiment which has been made, as to the nature and effects of the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and of the traffic in the same.

Certainly no man can pretend that intoxicating drinks have not had a full and fair opportunity to disclose what they can do for the weal or the woe of the human race.

This experiment has extended to all countries. It has continued through centuries after centuries, and always with one uniform series of results. Those results have been pecuniary loss, bodily disease, intellectual, social and moral degradation, political derangement and corruption, and the blasting of parental and domestic hopes, and the entailment of inconceivable misery. These results, however, though seen in all ages, have been greatly augmented, extended and increased, by the facilities of modern distillation, even to such an extent as seriously to threaten the radical degradation of the human race.

The results of this experiment have been given, not in vague conjectures, and in rhetorical declamation, but in statistics derived from jails, penitentiaries, lunatic asylums, hospitals, alms-houses, civil and criminal courts, tax-books, and the numberless records of crime and domestic suffering with which the press is continually darkened and overwhelmed. Let us listen to the testimony of a few who have been called to survey this evil in its results. The Grand Jury in their recent session in the city of Boston, the city of the pilgrim fathers,

after a session of forty-nine days, and the examination of 479 cases, and 1466 witnesses, proceed to say :—

“Of the proximate and obvious cases of crime, they will mention but one. Grand Juries in this Commonwealth and elsewhere, have repeatedly declared their conviction, that three-fourths of the crime of the community might be attributed, directly or indirectly, to the intemperate use of strong drinks. The present Grand Jury have come to the same conclusion. And though it does not belong especially to the function of the Grand Jury to investigate this matter, it does eminently belong to them to mention its pernicious influence. This cause of crime fills the prisons faster than the community can build them. The means of indulgence are abundantly furnished by numerous shops for the illegal sale of intoxicating drinks—groceries of all sorts, from the fashionable drinking saloon, down to the ‘hole in the wall’ and the filthy cellar, where the air reeks with stench and blasphemy—the resort of the idle, the thoughtless, the profligate, the ruffian, and the harlot. The municipal authorities can remove this nuisance, or at least abate it, whenever they will.”

A committee of the State Temperance Convention of Maryland, in an address to the inhabitants of that state, set forth the melancholy condition of things in Baltimore by adopting and applying to that city the following startling picture which the Philadelphia Bulletin of January, 1853, gives of the increase of drunkenness and crime in the city of William Penn.

“The most careless observer of things can hardly have failed to mark the rapid progress which Intemperance has made (in Philadelphia) within the past year. Scarcely a day passes in which the foot passenger is not compelled to turn aside in the public streets to avoid the rude assault, the contaminating touch, or the profane language of some miserable man, freshly cast forth from the dens of debauch, which now crowd the thoroughfares of our once quiet and orderly city. The most disgusting exhibitions of public drunkenness, disgrace alike the broad sunlight of noon, and the repose of night. The most degrading of vices, emboldened, it would seem, by the encouragement afforded to it by law, has thrown off its mask, and no longer finds it necessary to slink into corners, or to hide itself in secret places, but walks daily unabashed before the public eye, rioting in unrestrained license, and displaying its deformity without a blush.

“The parti-colored lights, which like baleful fires indicate the sources from which this polluting stream is discharged, glare in close proximity along the extended lines of travel. Neighborhoods which were once quiet and respectable have become noisy and disreputable. Places of public amusement are demoralized, and the most retired walks of the citizens disturbed, in a city that once boasted of its order, sobriety and refinement. In many localities property is seriously depreciated by the contiguity of nuisances which cannot be abated because the law fosters them, and the

STATE coins from their vices a miserable bounty. Our youth are corrupted, our public manners depraved, our security invaded, our peace destroyed, our public character sullied, our taxes increased, our property diminished to sustain an evil, which, if it shall increase for any considerable period in the same ratio in which it has grown within the past year, will entail upon us results which years of exertion will fail to remove.”

To this the committee add the following fearful statements:—

Without overstraining this picture, we may truly add, that the very foundations of society seem broken up, and the usual restraints of law set at defiance. Crime stalks forth at mid-day, almost without check or restraint. Homicide, shooting and stabbing are matters of almost daily recital in our public prints. “It is but a little while since a man by the name of WHITE in the city of Baltimore, separated from his wife by intemperance begged her to let two of the children stay with him over night. Under the influence of the intoxicating draught he cut the throat of his daughter, an interesting girl of about thirteen years of age; then clapping a pistol to the head of his sleeping boy, about eight years old, blew his brains out; he then fired his dwelling, and finished the tragedy by cutting his own throat. The flames had made considerable progress before the fire was discovered; soon the firemen were on the spot and extinguished them, when the appalling sight of the crisped corpses of the victims of this liquid fire made the very firemen recoil with horror.”

What else is there known or recorded on the page of history, the uniform and familiar tendency of which is so constantly developed in results like these—results that have almost ceased to excite either scepticism or surprise? We need not wonder therefore that in 1837 a Grand Jury said “the License System, authorising the sale of strong drinks, even when most wisely and cautiously administered, we cannot but regard as at war with the well-being of the community. It is, in our judgment, nothing more than the selling of a commission for the organization and encouragement of *Drunkenness, Pauperism and Crime.*”

Similar testimony, in mournful abundance, crowds upon us from the old world. We will only adduce that of Mr. Buckingham before the House of Commons. After a startling exhibition of the extent of the traffic in England, Scotland and Ireland, he says with particular reference to the liquor trade of London, that it spread a flood of desolation over the whole surface of the country; which, departing from the mighty heart of the metropolis, was circulated in all the arteries and veins in the utmost extremities of the frame; and has been thence rolled back again in a torrent of wide-spreading devastation, that it has scarcely left a single spot not inundated by its overwhelming waves. (Hear, hear.) Let us seriously ask ourselves, what have been the effects of all this. Alas, sir, the answer is indeed a melancholy one. 1. *Deterioration of the public health to so sad a degree that our hospitals and asylums are filled with the*

victims of Intemperance. 2. *Increase of pauperism* in every parish, so that the poor rates bid fair to exceed the rental of the land. 3. *Destruction of public morals*, by the brutalization of the old, and the prostitution of the young. 4. The extinction of all honest pride of independence of the men, and the annihilation of all sense of decency in the women. The neglect of wives by their husbands; of children by their parents; and the breaking in sunder all those soft and endearing ties which heretofore were recognized as sacred amongst the humblest classes in society. These are but the outlines of this great chart of misery and degradation which Drunkenness has traced out for our survey. The details are too full of sickening horror to be painted by any pen, or uttered by any tongue; they must be seen to be credited and witnessed before they can be felt in all their force."

To this he adds, after a minute and careful estimate, "it may be therefore asserted, without fear of contradiction, that the aggregate of expenses entailed, and losses sustained, by the pernicious habit of drinking, exceeds £100,000,000 annually, or \$444,444,444; that, in a mere pecuniary and economical sense, it is the greatest blight that ever cursed our country; and, like the canker-worm, is eating out its very vitals."—(*Speech of Mr. Buckingham, M. P.*)

A similar estimate has been made on the basis of well known facts of the pecuniary and other evils inflicted on this nation by the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits within ten years. The results are these:

1. It has cost in direct expenses 50 millions annually,	\$50,000,000
2. It has cost in indirect expenses 60 millions annually,	60,000,000
3. It has burnt and otherwise destroyed property to the amount of	5,000,000
4. It has destroyed 30,000 lives annually,	30,000
5. It has made not less than 20,000 widows annually,	20,000
6. It has made at least 100 maniacs annually,	100
7. It has made not less than 100,000 orphans annually,	100,000
8. It has instigated the commission of murders,	1,400
9. It has caused suicides,	9,000
10. It has consigned to jails and prisons,	150,000
11. It has endangered the inheritance left us by our fathers, and fixed a foul blot on the fair name of America.	

— See *Christian Secretary*.

Such is but a mere specimen of the testimony by which are set forth the results of this long and fatal experiment. Volumes could not fully exhibit the whole. Can any thing be conceived of as more complete and conclusive?

Let it also be thoughtfully considered that this testimony is uncontradicted, and incapable of contradiction. Few cases exist in which all facts tend one way, and in which the whole argument is on one side, but this is one of that few. Nothing can be more striking than that in a case involving so much pecuniary interest, no effort is made to contradict such damning facts as these. The case is given up in despair.

We would next call your particular attention to a fact which is as momentous and commanding in this

great controversy, as it is undeniable. It is this, that the opponents of the Maine Law cannot, and do not even pretend that its absolute, thorough and universal enforcement could or would result in any such evils as these. From the earnestness with which it is opposed, and the outcry which is made, one would suppose that some definite great evils could be specified which would result from it. Where there is so much smoke there ought to be some fire.

Let us then suppose that it were true that the enforcing of this law could be proved to tend to injure the health, the intellectual energy, the morals and the religion of this State and of the world, to load and oppress the community with taxes, to fill society with widows and orphans and broken down debauchees, and worthless drunkards and beggars, and to reduce and exhaust the vital energies of the human species itself; let us suppose that the opponents of the law could truly say these things, would they not feel themselves invested with the armor of Omnipotence, in opposing the law and calling for its repeal? Would not those political presses of the city, state, and nation, now so silent, resound from morning to night, till the law was erased from the statute book?

How weak then—how desperate must be that cause which cannot be argued on any such grounds, but is compelled to leave them all as the uncontrollable arguments of the friends of the law. They have nothing to say of widows or orphans or debased and ruined humanity. They hate the very sound of the terms. In the dialect of Tartarus which they use, all philanthropic and religious regard to such things is fanaticism.

To what then do they resort? Where lies the great evil of this law? Reducing all that is or can be said to its final issues, it comes to this: the law interferes with a certain mode of acquiring property, and with a certain mode of indulging appetite. This is the whole. True, they talk largely of rights and privileges, but, after all, their claim amounts merely to the right and the privilege of doing these two things. We cannot exactly call them men of one idea. We admit that they have two—**SELFISH PECUNIARY GAIN, and APPETITE.**

Let us, then, meet them on these points. And first, what would be the effect on the world, if this mode of acquiring property were abolished. Let us suppose a clean sweep made of the trade in wines, beers, and distilled liquors, throughout our land, throughout the world. What then? Would the world feel the loss? Would a paralysis fall on society as if some vital organ had been smitten and destroyed? Are there no other kinds of business to which the capital and industry could be transferred? Would there be any less thrift? Any less industry and energy? Any less real property? Any less power to purchase and to pay? No sane man can pretend it for a moment. The result would be, on the other hand, an influx into this world of an amount of life, and health, and wealth, and energy, and industry, and thrift, and skill, and intellect, and moral, social and domestic enjoyment, never known or conceived before.

Let us now look at the question of appetite. Supposing, then, that it were true that the law should actually render it impossible for men to indulge an appetite for intoxicating drink at all. We know that it will not reach this result. But we wish to make and to meet the strongest case. Suppose, then, even that it were true that any self-indulgent man of wealth, or any of the thirsty city authorities, if there are such in any of our cities, should find all the bars of all the hotels, even the most splendid, closed upon them, and should actually be reduced to the dire necessity of drinking pure cold water, would the evil be so gigantic and intolerable as to call for a repeal of the law? Is it not plain, even to a demonstration, that the utmost that could be said, even in such a case, would be that a wise law had conferred on them a much needed benefit, even against their own will.

Such, then, is the utmost that can be made of the evils of the law, if it were fully and universally enforced.

What, then, shall be said of the great outcry that is made as to rights? Has a small minority a right to make money, or to gratify a depraved appetite at the expense of universal humanity? This, then, is the question in a nut-shell.

We would now call your attention to the effort that is being made to produce despondency and discouragement, as to the possibility of sustaining and executing the law. Here is, beyond all doubt, the critical point of the conflict. The enemies of the law hope to succeed here. They hope to divide and paralyze and scatter the friends of the law in this State by a concerted impulse, and then to roll the tide of defeat onward and over the world.

Let us then look carefully at this matter. Why cannot this law be sustained, perfected, and executed? Are not those engaged in the liquor-traffic a small minority of the community? We know that they are. Is their traffic any benefit to the community? Is it for the real interest of the majority that it should continue? These questions admit of but one answer. The vast majority of the community have no interest in the traffic. It is to them nothing but an unmitigated curse. Why then have they not only the right but the power to suppress it? How is it that a small minority can retain forever the power to tyrannize over the health, life, property, temporal and eternal interests of the whole community?

We will tell you the only way in which it can come to pass. It can only come to pass through the want in the majority of intelligence, unity, faith, deep moral emotion, and that lofty courage and overawing boldness which the momentous facts of the case justify and demand.

The truth is that the faith and deep emotions of the community have never yet even begun to come up to the great facts, the truth of which we know and admit.

There is not such another class of facts in the history of this world, and never can be. There never was a cause for revolt, or civil war, which began to approximate to the atrocity of the deeds of the despot alcohol.

We know these deeds—we admit them; but in the community as a whole there has never been awakened the terrific energy of moral indignation which they ought to excite. Deeds that ought to shake the globe thicken around us, and instead of reacting with consuming and terrific indignation, the community tends to a moral paralysis, which will allow them at last tamely to acquiesce in them as the settled course of nature.

But is there any need of this? Have we not hearts and consciences, and the power of moral emotion and lofty courage? And if in ourselves we are too feeble for the crisis, is there not a God from whose ocean of pure and overawing moral emotions our souls can drink a full supply?

If all who know and believe aright on this subject were to do this, the unity and the moral power of the friends of the law would be resistless. It would intimidate and overawe mere politicians at once. They would tremble and quail before it. They would soon understand that the law could be sustained, perfected, and enforced.

And now what issue is there to be compared with this? For be it remembered that all other courses have been tried. Moral suasion has been tried; it can reach to a certain extent. But the advocates of the liquor traffic are beyond its power. They do not desire or expect to be reached by it; and, therefore, they advocate its use with such zeal. They have tried it, and they know and do not doubt that their hearts are hard enough to resist it in its highest forms. Be it remembered, too, that licensing gives a legal and moral respectability to the traffic, but does not in the least limit or restrain it. A long and unbroken course of experience has taught this truth. If any thing is true, this is.

The real issue is, shall nothing be done? Shall we give up in despair? Shall this gigantic, all-pervading evil, which threatens not merely to ruin this nation, but to corrupt and degrade the race be allowed to rage forever unchecked? Shall we basely abandon the conflict?

May God in his mercy arouse us to put forth the energies which we have, and which are ample and abundantly sufficient to avert these results. The law if perfected and executed, is an effectual remedy and defence. We have full power to perfect and enforce it, if united, bold and energetic. The facts before us are amply sufficient to produce any degree of conviction, union, and emotion.

They transcend infinitely, unspeakably, any other questions now at issue in the political world. They underlie all the future destinies of humanity.

Let us entreat you then, in a crisis like this, to be true to your glorious mother state, to your country, to humanity, to God. Millions of eyes are upon you, millions of hearts throb in view of your course.

Subordinate all other issues to this one. Do it with a fullness and decision and energy that shall settle the question forever. It can be done, conviction can be fixed, the question can be set at rest, for you are the majority, and if you will but be united, and faithful to yourselves, to your children, to your country, and to God, the work will be done.

